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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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PEACEABLE LIVING.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."—Rom. XII. 18.

Living at peace with our fellowmen is a profitable aim in life, and is worthy of thought and study, and then of earnest effort. It cannot always be done. The wisest men, the best men, the most thoughtful men, the men who are most studious of peace, may have contention forced upon them. Lot could not live peaceably with the inhabitants of Sodom—to his great credit. Moses could not live at peace with Egypt, when he saw his people oppressed. It would have been a shame if he could. Samuel could not live at peace when the king, despotic, arrogant, fractious, was misleading the people. David could not live at peace with Saul. Saul would not let him. The prophets could not live at peace with the idolatrous people whom they were sent to instruct and rebuke, and who would not be corrected nor reformed. Jesus could not live at peace. The most genial, and gentle, and meek, and merciful, and loving of all beings was he; and yet, it was impossible that he should live at peace with his own countrymen, in his own time. Therefore you find it said, "If it be possible." In this great quarrelsome world, it is not made obligatory on a man to be at peace with his fellowmen anyhow. The command begins with the implication that it is not always possible. The qualification is, "as much as lieth in *you*." You may be at discords; but see to it that you do not produce them. Let them be the result of other men's misconduct, and not of yours.

A man, therefore, may be at odds with his fellowmen, and yet be a peaceable man—a man peace-loving and peace-seeking. As far as in him lies he may be living peaceably; and yet he may be in contention. We must sometimes be in contention in law. We must sometimes be in contention in great discussions. We must strive and contend for great moral truths, and for causes which turn on the discussion of great moral truths. It is impossible that there should

SUNDAY MORNING, June 30, 1872. LESSON: ROM. XII. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 660, 784, 704.

be contention where great interests are involved, and where the appetites and passions of men have become rooted in some wrong, without there being cause and occasion of much disquiet and uneasiness and unpeaceableness.

The Lord himself said, "I am not come to bring peace, but a sword;' and so a Christian man, sweet tempered, most sympathetic, most genial and kind, may agitate his times with fierce discords, and yet may be excusable—nay, justifiable.

It is not in regard to these moral and public reformatory relations that the passage particularly speaks. It is with respect to our ordinary conduct in the household, in society, and in the transactions of common business. We are commanded, as a part of our allegiance to God and of our proper Christian duty, so to carry ourselves, in all our daily and familiar relations, that if there be conflict and disturbance, it shall not be our fault. Of course, if you be proud, you will say it is not your fault at any rate: but it must not be our fault in the sight of God if there is not peace and quietness where we are present.

Men may live together largely in peace from the fact that they do not care for each other, and do not come near each other. We are living very peaceably with the Chinese that are in China; not so peaceably with those who are in California. Men in a vast hotel are living at peace with each other. That is, they do not know each other. One does not even know that the other is there. They have no commerce whatever. It would be a pity if a man could not live at peace with people whom he did not see and mingle with.

So, in life, we may ignore men. We may have so little to do with them that we shall be at peace with them in a negative way.

Then, there may be a kind of forced peace. There may be a peace which is the result of pride and of self-command. Our thoughts may be truculent, sharp, analytic, bitter. Our analysis is usually such as wasps make with their sting. Men have inside censoriousness by which they dissect the faults of others, and keep it to themselves. They are, in some sense, therefore, peaceable; but they are not peaceable in the sight of God.

An unexploded torpedo is peaceable; but we should not consider it an implement of peace. It has everything ready for an explosion when it is touched off.

And so a man cannot be expected to have the Gospel disposition of peace simply because he is not in a broil, so long as he has dispositions which, upon occasion, when a fit opportunity presents itself, will bring him into some disagreeable collision with men. It may be called a latent war—a kind of truce.

Cordial peace—that in which good-will exists; that in which men like and are liked; that in which men give and get happiness; that in which men help each other—that is the peace which is meant. Peace which lightens the burdens of life, which diminishes the friction of life, which takes away the cares of life, which makes men helpful one toward another, which removes from men all forms of vindictiveness, of oppressiveness, of exaggerated pride, and of vanity—that is the kind of peace that is meant. Active, virtue-peace—not merely indifferent, negative peace—that is what is meant.

I will point out some of the causes as observed, as experienced, as shown, which tend to the destruction of peace, and some of the more familiar agencies by which we may live at peace with all men.

First, self-seeking is one of the causes of discord—that self-seeking which, in little things and in great, tends to violate the rights of others. All men must, in one sense, be self-seeking. The term *self-seeking*, in its offensive designation, does not apply to those who simply seek food, raiment, rest, and a sphere of activity. These are normal rights. Every man has a right to life, unless it be forfeited by crime. He has a right to all those agencies which go to give him power and wisdom. So much attention to our own selves as is necessary for our happiness is not selfishness, and is not in any odious sense self-seeking. But, over and above that, there are thousands of persons that are well-meaning, who disturb those that are around about them by self-seeking. Unconsciously they put themselves forward. Perhaps, because they are a little more alert, and have a little more experience, they are in first. They get a little of the best on the right and on the left. And people who are in their presence find it disagreeable. They are not cheated, but they are second best all the time. They see these persons, who are no better than they are—not so good—in disposition, having, in little things, the best of life all around about them, by a sort of constant, alert self-seeking.

Although this does not rise to the dignity of a grave offence, it does rise to the dignity of mischief. It tends to rile men. It tends to keep them in a disagreeable state of mind.

If you sit at table in the household, and there be one boarder who is forward in securing all the delicacies which are served,; who has an advantage, by some diplomacy, with all the servants; who is on the right side, in some mysterious way, with the superintendent, and is perpetually favored in all things—there is scarcely one person in that whole artificial household who does not feel, in some way, annoyed and irritated. The peace is broken—and that without any intention on his part to break the peace.

In all our intercourse with men, we are bound not only to avoid outright and violent selfishness, which is aggressive, but also to avoid minor forms of selfishness. It is true that a particle of emery thrown at a man will not hurt him as much as if a rock were thrown at him; but a particle of emery in a man's shoe will annoy him all day long, and take away his peace and comfort, And a selfishness which does not meet a man, like a lion, in his path, and attack him with paw and tooth, may attack him in such a way as to keep him irritated and chafed all the time. There are thousands of things that chafe our fellow men which we do not think of; but we are to live peaceably with all men, and we are to see to it that our influence does not rouse up and chafe their feelings and dispositions.

This is a region in which etiquette is moral duty. Though many of the forms of society, and much of its usage, will, at times, be carried to an immoderate extent, yet, in the main, etiquette is the common law of kindness in common things. It is what experience has determined to be the best under all circumstances, and it is not to be set aside as something which belongs to the realm of fashion, and to persons who feel themselves to be greater than their neighbors. It is hard to get along without friction. Little annoyances, though they are minute in each instance, are yet like the particles of the fragrance of a flower which fill the air by their multitude, and not by the magnitude of any single particle.

Vanity oftentimes tends to peace, inasmuch as it makes men behave themselves for the sake of being praised; but when it exists in excess, it becomes obnoxious, and is chargeable with being a disturber of the peace.

It may tend to amusement. There are those whose vanity is so curious, so wonderfully made, and so strangely worn, that it amuses persons as much as a fool's bells do children, or as much as a clown's stripes, in a circus, do the lookers-on. There are those whom everybody except themselves knows to be vain, and they are full of the little indications of vanity. Where it is combined, in the main, with good sense, and with sterling qualities, we not only put up with it, but sometimes even become fond of it.

When men seek for beautiful wood, to use in cabinet work, they seek, not for that which is straight-grained, but for knots, or for those parts which are formed where the branches grow together, and which are full of contortions. Crooked wood, sawed into veneers, and polished, makes the most beautiful work that there is.

So, sometimes, men's little faults, if they be of the right kind, are a sort of ornamentation. Though we cannot saw them out into

veneers, and put them over other things, yet those things which constitute men's oddities oftentimes make them agreeable to us. We do not want men to be like candles cast in one mold, and all just the same. We want individuals to be distinguishable one from another. We do not like stereotyped people. We should not like to have everybody's face like everybody else's face. It would not be agreeable to the eye. And we do not like to see persons' dispositions all alike. One reason why perfect people are not so agreeable as imperfect people are, is, that they are so much alike. They have a certain sort of straightness and precision in their goodness, and we wish that they were not so good. We like to have our friends carry their heads high in the air, toward heaven; and yet, we like to have their feet on the ground, that they may be alongside of us, and that we may know that they touch the earth as well as we. Men's faults sometimes become attractive in one way or another.

There is a disagreeable and ill-advised measuring of one's faults. Where a man is excessively proud, we have a latent feeling, "Thank God, I am not so proud as he is." Where a man is stingy, we are apt to say, "My pocket is large in the mouth." Where a man stumbles and bungles, we say, "I would not be such a person for all the world." That is to say, "I am not such a person. I am not a stumbler nor a bungler." Aside from this, however, there may be in a man's vanity an element of kindness and benevolence which makes it not only endurable, but sometimes beautiful and palatable.

But then, where there is an avarice of praise, where vanity tends to falsity, where it works under guises, and sets snares and traps to catch praise, a man may be disagreeable; and so, oftentimes, a person, by his vanity, sets people around about him at odds against him, and against each other.

Under such circumstances, vanity naturally excites a desire to punish it. Where we see men in a social circle about us carrying themselves as they ought not to, every man feels that there is a small section of the judgment day in him, and desires to avenge himself on them, by annoying them in some way. If we see that a man is inordinately vain, we want to humble him; we want to bring him down; we want to stop him in his course. Inordinate vanity is a provocation to minor forms of vengeance.

How to cure a man who is constitutionally vain I do not know. I do not believe constitutional vanity can be cured. It may be made benevolent, and it may be disciplined and restrained here and there. I have seen pride very much modified. I have seen irritable persons become very self-governed. I have seen persons who were inordinately stingy become generous. But I do not know

that I ever saw a person in whom inordinate vanity was cured or materially modified. Everything seems to play into that fault, and make it permanent. I do not know of anything that will remedy it except that medicine which cures all things—death. And yet, if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, though you be vain, live peaceably with all men. Do the best you can with your vanity.

Pride, or a sense of one's own proper individuality, is one of the noblest of human attributes. It is the very core of manhood. It approaches to a moral sense. It is one's own proper, inward, individual personality. A sense of our own importance, of our own worth, in the great sphere of manhood, makes us self-reliant and independent. It often acts as a moral sense, and restrains us from things that are base and vile. But where it transcends its proper force, and acts in an exaggerated form, it is exceedingly provocative. It makes men cold, and haughty, and unsocial.

I have seen men in whom there was no more sign of geniality, of sympathy, or of a sense of their connection with their fellow-men, than there is of vegetating growth in the icicle. They were absolutely cold among their fellow-men.

Pride not only tends to shut a man up in himself coldly, but it tends, through haughtiness, to lead men to esteem others less than themselves. Proud men often look down upon their fellow-men with a spirit of contempt.

There are two ways of looking down. There is the way in which a judge looks down on a sneak-thief, when he is about to sentence him; and there is the way in which a mother looks down on her babe in the cradle. Looking down is a different thing when it is love that looks, from what it is when it is indignation, or a sense of superiority. One bruises and mangles, and the other nourishes, and fills the soul with joy.

Now, proud men are fond of esteeming others as their inferiors, and of carrying themselves accordingly; and their presence is a proclamation of contempt. Many persons never go into the presence of a contemptuous and proud man without feeling irritated. A man's pride leads him to assume an attitude of defiance, not because he means to throw out a challenge, but because the natural tendency of pride is to put a man on his mettle.

You go into the presence of a round, rosy, happy, genial-hearted man, and he says to you, "Well, neighbor, how about these little matters which we agreed to? Have not you forgotten them?" You instantly say, "I beg a thousand pardons. I had forgotten them." He wins you right to his side, the first moment, and you thank him for calling your attention to your fault, and make haste to correct it.

The same thing happens between you and your proud neighbor, and he looks upon you in a supercilious way, and says, "I thought there was an agreeement between us about these matters." You straighten up, and say, "What if you did." You instantly throw yourself into a pugnacious attitude, and there is a battle at once.

Men defend wrongs in themselves, even when they know that they are wrong, if they are called to account for them by the haughty pride and assumption of men. Especially this is the case if we are proud too—and most of us are, in spots. At times there may be found something of pride even in the most obsequious persons.

This pride separates one man from another. It leads to a want of sympathy between them, and keeps them apart. It prevents their participation in that healthful intercourse on which the peace and integrity of society depend.

I hinted at the unconscious natural language of pride. One of the most important practical truths which you observe in the carrying out of life, is that that faculty in you which predominates over every other will tend to reproduce its action in the minds of susceptible persons with whom you come in contact. If you, being extremely weighed down and sober, go into a room where people are merry, in a short time there will steal over them a sort of hushing, sobering influence. Your influence upon those present will be like that of a piece of ice in a tumbler of water.

If a physician goes into a sick-room, as every physician should, with a cheerful countenance and with encouraging words, how the thermometer rises in the patient's mood! There is hope where before there was deep despondency.

If you are a mirthful man, and you are in company, it will not be long before you will excite a spirit of mirthfulness in those who are around you. If you relate a mirthful story, their memories will recall mirthful scenes. Your state of mind will reproduce itself in them.

If you are irascible, men with whom you come in contact will likewise be apt to be irascible. You go home at night, and say, "I never saw so many cross people in this town as I have seen to-day." Well, you carried the fire-brand which set them a-going. Your combativeness and irritability excited the same qualities in them.

Proud people are very liable to be met by proud people. You will hear a proud man say, "Everybody insulted me to-day: the drayman insulted me; the ticket-man at the ferry insulted me; the car-conductor insulted me; business men insulted me." All

day long the man has been perfectly salted with insults; and yet, he has brought them all upon himself.

Let a man carry himself as though he were a sovereign; let him feel that he is better than other people; let him act so that pride shall utter its natural language, and everybody will defend himself against that pride, all bringing the same feeling to bear in return. Let your dog bark, and my dog will answer him.

So, then, men may, quite unconsciously, by the natural language of an overweening pride, stir up their fellow-men with perpetual irritations and annoyances. A man thinks himself to be most peaceable; he does not know why it is that everybody quarrels with him; and yet, he quarrels with everybody.

I need not say that combativeness, in both its open and latent forms, is subject to the charge of breaking the peace. In its open form it takes on intellectual phases. There are a great many men who cannot produce conviction in a discussion, who fail to convince in preaching or oratory, because they are so disputatious. If you stand on one side of the street with a bow, and men are passing on the other side, and you draw it at them, they throw up their shield if they have anything to defend themselves with. They do not want to be hit, and so they endeavor to protect themselves. So, if a man who is discussing a matter discusses it pugnaciously, and hurls his opinions at you dogmatically, you take his manner and attitude as a challenge to defend yourself. You will not have opinions crammed down your throat. Your self-respect is hurt by a man who undertakes to compel you to accept his views. You are not willing to acknowledge that he is the only man in the world who knows anything. If he lays down his doctrine, and says that there is no possible getting away from it, you say, "Well, I will see if I cannot get away from it." He provokes you by his dogmatism. This is not the way to convince men. Many men will take a thought from you as a gift, but will not let you throw it into their house as a bomb. You will often see a man who is in many respects well-meaning and right-sided, by his excessive pugnacity drive men away from him. I have known men who would have driven an audience of a thousand people away from them every year, all their life long, if they had had a chance. They were quite unconscious that the reason of their unpopularity was their own excessive, bull-headed combativeness. They thought that men were totally depraved, and did not like the truth, and that they did not like them because they preached the truth.

The same is true in regard to conversation and social relations.

A man may keep men in a disagreeable mood so that they will not like to talk with him. When he talks, he legislates; when he holds intercourse, he does it as a sovereign would; and he annoys and offends men. This is the intellectual form of combativeness.

Men may be pugnacious, quarrelsome in their dispositions, and yet they may not know it. A man may have disagreeable qualities which utterly separate between him and those around about him, and yet be unconscious of it. "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," said the Saviour. There are persons who seem never to have known what this passage means. They are almost invariably quarrelsome. In everything their whole life puts on the form of attack.

But there are latent forms of combativeness which are more common. There is what may be called supersensibility. There are cases where combativeness or irritability is latent. Though it does not show itself, probably it works in the brain and keeps it excited.

Sulkiness, moroseness, all modified forms of temper, are sources, not only of unhappiness to the persons in whom they exist, but of annoyance to those who are around about them. All forms of observation, all criticism, all wit and humor, which are employed at the expense of men's feelings, are latent forms of combativeness.

I am sorry for persons who always see the bad first, and the good last, or never. Whether it be in art, or whether it be in the conduct of affairs, or whether it be in social life, one should know what is harmony and what is discord, what is straight and what is crooked, what is right and what is wrong. A man that is strongly sensitive to the beautiful and true and right, is in a healthy condition of mind—and health is the most beautiful thing in the world. In the plant, in its place; in the animal, in its place; in society, in its place; in all parts of the mental economy, a healthy, normal condition—that is the thing which is the most beautiful, and which ought to be the most attractive.

There are those who think that to see people's weaknesses, and to hold them up in the light of ridicule, shows a peculiar smartness—something more than a common strength of mind; but I do not think it does.

Suppose there should be a fellow so dexterous that, walking along the street, and seeing an old gentleman passing by, he could give him a nip in a manner so sly that no one could know how it was done; and suppose he should rejoice to see the old gentleman jump? Suppose there was a little boy so cunning that, stooping, he could hit the man so that he should not know who hit him, and

he should laugh to see the man rise up and look around in amazement to see where the blow came from? Suppose one should throw a torpedo under a man's feet so deftly as not to be discovered in the act, and should enjoy seeing the man jump and look in vain to see who it was that threw it? Suppose there should be one who, for his own pleasure, everywhere he went, gave some annoyance to everybody that passed by him, in ways so artful as not to be detected? Would you praise him? Would you say that he was an expert fellow? Would you call him a perfect genius? If you should see a person sitting on the corner of the street, and somehow making uncomfortable everybody who went by, and he should laugh, and for a half an hour tell you how he had fixed this man, and how he had played a trick on that man, would you not feel that there was not another such miscreant in society? And yet, persons do the same thing mentally. They see all the little obliquities that there are in men, and use them as a means of annoying them. They see things which they ought not to see. There are many things in life which you ought to be ashamed to see, and which, if you do see them, you ought to pretend not to see. There is an amiable deception which I think will be forgiven. Do you suppose that at table you ought to see all the things that happen? If a lady takes a swallow of tea before it is quite cool, ought you to know it? Never. A thousand little things are happening in life which a proper delicacy would lead you to act as if you did not see. Things are going on in life which should be hidden as much as possible. There is nobody who has not a whole museum of absurdities. And if you like those things, you can fish them out. There is not a faculty in my soul which does not make itself buffoon, at one time or another, measured by the higher law. There is not a single attribute in man which does not at times make itself foolish. Such things are bound up in the nature of men. They are a part of the indispensable economy under which we are being developed, and are growing to man's estate. And ought we to think of these things, and see them quickly, and make them conspicuous, without inquiring what the effect will be upon the welfare of others?

Sometimes men's peculiarities are inordinate, are despotic, and are the cause of mischief in life. Then we have a right to meet them and lash them with ridicule. Then it is that sarcasm may be used like a surgeon's knife. Then it is that wit and humor may do a legitimate work of humanity. But in the ten thousand little interplays of life, men should be amiable, as far as possible, and should see things that are sweet and agreeable. If they see other things they should hide them, or should seem not to see them.

You should take the mantle which is on your shoulder, and with it cover the nakedness of your brother, and not expose him to jeer and ridicule.

I need not speak of the malign passions—of envy, and jealousy, and hatred, and revenge—as they exhibit themselves in the store, in the shop, in the street, in the school, everywhere. The play of these baser feelings among men is recognized by all as morally wrong.

On the other hand, I will mention a few things which make directly for peace. First, let me speak of cheerfulness and good-nature. I hardly know how to define *cheerfulness*. It is partly a mental and partly a bodily element. There are some who are cheerful in a state of unhealth; but generally cheerfulness exists where one has fulfilled the physical conditions of health.

Also, there is usually associated with it a mental element of courage and hope. Therefore, in most instances, cheerfulness belongs to courageous natures. But whether it belongs to the one class or the other, whatever may be its cause, it is one of the blessings of life, and you should seek it for yourself, for your family, and for the community at large.

If any man has springs of cheerfulness and of good-nature in him, in the name of the God of benevolence let him not stop them up. Let him rather keep them open, that they may be a source of joy and consolation to his fellow men.

I have sometimes heard it said of young men that before they joined the church they were good fellows, but that afterward there was nothing in them. It is because some men think that religion consists in tying up the natural faculties. On the contrary, I think it consists in untying them, in giving them a wholesome development, and so making them better and sweeter and larger.

We do not put a colt into the harness for the sake of diminishing his power, but simply for the sake of directing it; and we are putting the harness on men, not to take away their power, but to organize it for use, and make it more facile. And in regard to good-cheer, humor, buoyancy of disposition, hopefulness—if a man has it naturally, it is an inestimable gift; and religion should make it more—not less. If you are converted to-day, you ought to laugh twice to-day where you did once yesterday. If last month you were a sinner, and were without hope in heaven, and still you were cheerful, now, if you are a Christian, you ought to have a cheerfulness that is sweeter, more ample, better directed. I would rather transmit to a child of mine a clear common-sense, with a cheerful and hopeful disposition, and the art of enjoying things as he finds

them, than to give him millions of money, with coronets and honors innumerable.

The fact is, we build our houses inside. The furniture of our houses which we enjoy is inside. The riches which are best for us are our constitutional riches. It is the soul that makes the man—not outside circumstances. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

A man who is cheerful can alleviate the sadness and gloom of a whole company where he is. One clear, open-hearted, agreeable, cheerful, hopeful, courageous nature, is medicine for a hundred desponding souls.

If God has given you a cheerful temperament—use it. Do not eclipse it, nor hide it under a bushel. If you have become a Christian here, understand that religion in this place is a religion which carries with it joy in the Holy Ghost, and not a religion that mopes, and dwells in melancholy.

Gentleness and kindness are elements of peaceableness. The opportunity for exercising these elements occurs every day and everywhere.

I wish, every day, when you go to your morning prayer, instead of praying that God will, for Christ's sake, forgive your sins, that he will guide you through the day, that he will prosper you in your business, that he will keep you from temptation—I wish, instead of making these generic, wholesale prayers, and promising that if God will grant them he shall have all the praise and glory, you would make some specific, retail prayers. Oh! how wholesome it would be, if, in the morning, you would kneel down by the side of your bed, and say, "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I have an unreasonable disposition. Thou knowest that I am irritable in myself, and ugly toward others. Thou knowest that I provoke and disturb those who are around about me. And I pray that thy grace may go with me to-day, and keep me gentle in tongue and in action"! And at noon it would be wholesome to follow that prayer by another of the same kind. And at evening it would be wholesome to look back and see how far God has helped you. Do this, and try it again and again, until it has become a habit with you.

Be gentle. Be easy to be entreated. That is, when persons come to you for favors which are reasonable and right, do not let them have to climb up to the attainment of them as a man would climb up a cliff to find sea-bird's eggs—at the risk of his life. Be willing to be good and kind to men.

I had occasion only day before yesterday to ask a favor—not for

myself, but for another. I went to one man, and laid the case before him. He was reluctant. He surveyed the matter all round. He looked at it on every side. He raised this, that, and the other difficulty. And finally, at the very last moment, he said, "If you cannot do any better, why, I will."

I went to another man. I sat down, and began to state the case to him. I had hardly got five sentences out before he said, "Of course I will. Let us go right away and attend to it." He jumped right over me in his eagerness to grant the favor. Ah! what a difference there is in the giving of different men!

Some men are like chestnuts before the frost has opened the burs. You have to club them, and club them, and club them, to get anything out of them. On the other hand, some men are like chestnuts which have ripened under the frost. They are already opened, and they rain down their favors upon you if you but jar the tree with your hand.

If a man is only gentle and kind, and easy to be entreated, how much of peace he can diffuse among his fellow men!

You are wishing that you were an orator. A man may be an orator and yet be a fool. You are wishing that you had genius. A man may have genius without having common sense; and a man might as well not be born as not to have common sense. You are wishing that you were conspicuous. God has given you, in the place where you are, an opportunity to do more toward making the world happy, than you could do if he had made you conspicuous, if you are only hopeful, and cheerful, and gentle, and kind.

This world is full of discords and attritions all the time. Selfishness is double-bladed, and is continually cutting and piercing both ways. There is conflict and rivalry on all hands. What we want, above all things, is peace.

The engineer does not let his engines run without oiling. He oils it at every great stop, and at every joint. Oh, that men could be engineers of peace, and introduce an element which should prevent friction and annoyance, and diminish, from day to day, the attritions of men, and from day to day increase their comforts! Oh, that men strove more to make those around about them cheerful, and hopeful, and self-helpful! Oh, that men would help their fellowmen, in order that they might help others; that they would lend to them, in order that they might lend to others; that they would console them, in order that they might console others! Oh, that men would be like their Father in heaven, who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

Human sympathy felt for all men is a source of great peaceableness and alleviation. We are told to "condescend to men of low estate." But do not let men see you go down to them. Let them find you down where they are, so that they shall not feel that, being superior to them, you took it into your mind to come down to them. Men do not like to be patronized in that way; and if you have a genuine, kind feeling toward them, you will not hurt their feelings by a show of condescension.

I think I can get angry as quick as anybody. I do not think I am deficient in that Christian grace. But I never saw a man yet whom I would not have compassion for, after I had had time to think, and to couple him with his own trials, and reflect where he came from, who educated him, what sort of a tussle he has had in life, and what temptations and provocations he has been subjected to. Above all, if I look at it a little, and think that we are like so many insects that battle in this world, when I see one who has failed, fallen down, done wrong, I think, "After all, he is a man, and he has eternity before him." And just the first thought of these things does away with all my hatred of him, and my heart yearns toward him. I cannot keep hot long enough to be as revengeful as editors and reformers want to be. I pity sinners even when they are culprits.

A man stole my horse the other day. If I had caught him within the first hour after I learned that the deed was committed, it would have fared hard with him; but after I had had time to reflect, I thought, "Let Lem go." But I would travel a great way to save the man, I fear that nothing will save him; but I am very sorry for him. I think that I could sit down by his side and talk to him as if he were a brother. I yearn after the manhood that is in him. I think of the immortality which lies around and beyond it.

I am not so anxious about the evils of my fellowmen as I am about that which is yet to come. What I think of, is that growth which shall bring my fellowmen into another life, free from the temptations of this, and cleansed from all bodily hindrances and shackles. My hope is that he may stand there so differently that I shall not know him as I do in the flesh.

There is a sympathy that we feel for the humanity that is in men, which enables us to make allowance for them on account of their circumstances and conditions. And it is one of the fruits of Christianity. Otherwise, how could God think of us and pity us. We are taught that there is a divine sympathy with men, and that God can look upon them with allowance, and we are exhorted to be of the same spirit; and as soon as we are, there will be very little necessity for clashings.

Let me give a few other simple directions for keeping the peace One is, *Hold your tongue.* There are more quarrels smothered by just shutting your mouth, and holding it shut, than by all the wisdom in the world. You may be obliged to speak; you may be a mother or father and have to scold your children; you may be a teacher, and feel called upon to rebuke, with all long-suffering, and with suffering that is not so long sometimes; but ordinarily, in common life, more than two-thirds of all the things which come up for remark, had better be let alone. Just hold your tongue.

The old Greeks said that a man had two ears and one mouth, that he might hear twice and speak once; and there is a great deal of good sense in it. You will find that if you will simply hold your peace, you will pass over nine out of ten of the provocations of life.

"But what if men say and do things so provoking that you cannot hold your tongue?" Then, above all things, hold it!

Closely allied to this direction for keeping the peace, is another, which is, *Let things alone.* Do not meddle with things. Do not pick at them. You can make an ulcer out of a pimple, if you will only pick it enough. All that is necessary is, just to pick it. Leave things to themselves. When things happen, do not talk about them. Keep quiet about them in the family. Do not tell anybody about them. If things happen in the neighborhood, do not try to settle them. The Lord deliver me from those Don Quixote settlers of troubles who go about the neighborhood fanning to a flame things that would die of themselves, if let alone. The majority of troubles in life are like single sparks. If you let them remain single, they will very soon go out, and nothing will be left but ashes—and ashes burn nobody; but if to a spark you put some kindling stuff, and blow it, you will soon have a flame. The little troubles of life, which are of daily occurrence, and of which there are so many, are to be let alone.

"You know that So-and-So has done so-and-so: what do you think we had better do about it?" Nothing. Let it alone. "You are aware that So-and-So has been going about fixing things in this way: What do you think we had better do about it?" Nothing. There are two plasters that will cure ninety-nine sores in a hundred—silence, and letting them alone. This is particularly so in the household, in the shop, and in other places where men are brought near to each other.

I might indulge in some strong remarks on the subject of those who adopt the contrary course—talebearers, who carry and fetch, and are like dogs that in summer days you will see with a stick in

their mouth, running here and there with sportive boys. I have seen persons who forever had mischievous tales in their mouth which they were carrying hither and thither. They ought to be employed in the devil's post-office; they ought to be common carriers of vile trash—and they are. They are distributing the devil's *billet-doux* throughout their neighborhood.

A dove would sit on a tree, on the gable of a house, or on some peak, for weeks and months, and never know that there was anything decaying in all the valley beneath him; but a turkey-buzzard would not sit there three minutes before he would see something dying. There is a great deal of difference in the nature of birds—and of men. There are men who are always seeing something, always smelling something, always hearing something. And the moment they hear, they diffuse. They carry abroad what they hear.

In our homes we suppress disagreeable things—we suppress stenches. No person who has ordinary decency fails to do this. It is only in respect to the excretions of the soul that men run about making themselves nasty carriers of nasty things for nasty purposes. Where there is no tale-bearer, contention ceases. Where there is no fuel, the fire goes out.

You may say, "Is not this line of instruction contrary to Scripture? For instance, does not James say, 'First pure, then peaceable'?" I have heard that quoted so long that I think it worth while to read it. One would really think that no one had any right to be peaceable until everybody and everything was pure. Is a man up for heresy? People say, "Let him alone. Do not disturb him. He means right. Time will help him. He will go right by and by." "Ah! but," says some old hound that runs down heresy, "does not the Word of God say, 'First pure, then peaceable'?"

Here is a man who has stolen a little. He did not do it in the right way, and so he was caught. The people are down on him, and are going to make an example of him. But some one stops them, and says, "Do not destroy the young man, for this his first or second fault. Save him. It is better to reform him, if possible, than to destroy him. There is nothing which answers the ends of justice like reformation." "But, ah!" says some old man who goes in for punishing wrong-doers, "'First pure, then peaceable.' Let him give evidence of reformation, and he may be spared. Otherwise, let him feel the lash."

Let us see what is said here:

"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle,

and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

It is not speaking about conduct. It is simply speaking of that inspiration which comes from good. Then it enumerates the different steps not in the order of cause and effect at all, nor in the order of a bill of items, nor as I would say, "I shall open my subject by showing so and so." It is not to be supposed that here priority is determined at all. James says, "First pure, then peaceable." He might just as well have said, "First peaceable, then pure." Or, he might have said, "First gentle, then peaceable, and then pure." It is simply a recapitulation. It is not a philosophical statement, observing a given order of causation.

"The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable."

It is not meant to be understood that a man must not be peaceable until he is pure. If that were the case, quarrelsome men would excuse themselves as not responsible, saying, "I am not pure yet; and the command is that I must be first pure and then peaceable." Such an interpretation of this passage would open the doors of universal indulgence and license. The text is a mis-quoted one. We are to be peaceable for the sake of purity, as well as pure for the sake of peace. It works both ways. We are to be gentle for the sake of peaceableness, as well as peaceable for the sake of gentleness. The two things are interchangeable.

Once more. How much better it is to be under the benison of God, and inherit the blessings which have been pronounced on peace-makers, than have the remunerations which those men receive who live to irritate their fellowmen, and to fill human life with spines and prickles.

I am sorry for this weeping and groaning old world which rolls around as though it were set to perform a requiem in the universe by day and by night. It is sad to think of the depths of the human troubles, and mistakes, and stumblings, and overthrows, and destructions, which are going on throughout the earth.

I sit, at eventide, and look over on yonder city, with its myriad lights scattered along the shore, which appear like the eyes of watching dragons; and I think, "If all those houses were uncovered, and I could look into them, would I see more chambers of gladness and joyfulness, or more of sadness, and sorrow, and heart-aching, and disappointment and excited desires ungratified? That great city is a smothering reservoir of human suffering, as well as of human aspiration and enjoyment; and the whole world groans and travails in pain until now.

But blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed is every man who car-

ries himself as the mignonette carries itself, homely and small, but with more fragrance than it can keep, filling the air with sweetness, and rejoicing every man who passes by. A Christian man, though he be humble and inconspicuous, like the mignonette, should be full of the fragrance of love and gentleness and peace. Or, if he be more aspiring, let him be as the honeysuckle, that never climbs so high that it forgets to blossom, and never blossoms so high that it cannot send down fragrance in showers to the low-lying creatures beneath it. Whether you be high or low, let there be enough of the influence of God shed abroad in your heart for you and for those around about you. So shall you be children of your Father which is in heaven.

This is better than worldly logic. It is better than the decrees of authority. It is better now, it will be better through life, and it will be more satisfying in the dying hour. You will never, in the morning of the resurrection, be sorry for any tear that you have wiped away; you will never be sorry for any aspiration that you have excited; you will never be sorry for any kindness that you have done; you will never be sorry for any blow that you have withheld; you will never be sorry for any bitter word unuttered; you will never be sorry for refraining from those things which open graves in men's souls; you will never be sorry that you lived peaceably with all men, though you will be sorry if you have quarreled with any man.

May God grant that we may be His children, and so love peace.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, our Father, remembering the mercies of past days. Thou art not to us only what thou art made known to be in thy Word. Thou hast translated thyself unto our experience, and the meaning of thy word we have found out in our Father's house and by the way. Through life, in sorrow, in anguish of heart, in prosperity, in crowning joys, we have discerned thee. Thou hast given us glimpses of thyself through every opening experience of our lives; and as thou hast been our fathers' God, so hast thou been our God. Thou hast been the God of the patriarch, and of the prophet, and of the martyr; and yet, thou hast made thyself nearer to us than thou dost seem when we read of thee in them. Thou hast walked with us. We have communed with thee. Thou hast tenderly upheld us in our weakness. Thou hast comforted us in our sorrows. Thou hast made the invisible space around about us populous. Thou hast built up in our imagination, and caused to glow with all things which are to be desired, the home, the heaven, which thou hast promised us. Thou hast granted us some sense of the mystery of godliness, and some sense of the majesty of God; and our thoughts have been pilgrims through the mighty realm where thou art; and though, by searching, we cannot find thee out to perfection, we have discerned thee. As they that look upon the mountains cannot see all that is in them, nor the whole range thereof, so have we not found thee out; and yet we have explored thy nature, and learned truly that which we know. We have discerned dimly where point after point thou dost recede toward the infinite and the eternal; and we rejoice in that which we know, and in the overhanging glory of that which we discern faintly, and in the faith of that which is unknown, and which will yet to us transcend in beauty all that now we can frame or fashion by our imagination. For thou art not less than an earthly father or an earthly mother. Thy glory is not less than the glory of an earthly potentate. Thou dost lift thyself up in eternal excellence far beyond anything which man can kindle or know. And we shall not be disappointed. Thy tenderness will be more exquisite than we think. Thy gentleness will transcend all the measures which we have of gentleness among men. Thine infinite goodness, thine all-conquering love, the sweetness of thy personal presence, the glory, the beauty of that estate into which thou wilt bring us, the nobleness of thy friendship, thy converse—there is nothing that eye hath seen, or that ear hath heard, or that it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, which can be compared to these things. We believe that they exist, though we do not know exactly what they are. And we rejoice in them.

O Lord, we desire to be made more and more the recipients of that faith by which we discern invisible things, and perceive that things which are not shall overcome things which are. The noise of life, its strifes and its cares, are too much for us. As a mirror is dimmed by the breath of him who looks into it all day long, so we are shadowed by our very duties. We are overcast by things which are good as well as by things which are evil. We are warped, biased. We cannot endure trouble and defeat as men in God should. Nor can we stand in the blandishments of prosperity as firmly and securely as we ought. We are walking through a desert land, pilgrims and strangers, discouraged, at times, by short day journeys. We are easily overcome by weariness. We are overborne by despondency in the midst of discomforts. But, O Lord our God, thou comfortest us, and thou wilt unto the end. We rejoice that we are not shut up to perfection as the condition of thy sympathy and thy love. We rejoice

that we are conscious that thou hast made us, and that we are under a providence which is shaping us, and that thou knowest what we are, and that notwithstanding our weakness and sinfulness thou art not discouraged concerning us. Thou art not weary of thy charge. Thou art not surprized at anything which we do. Thou knowest that we are babes, and more patient art thou with us than the nurse is with the child. Thou knewest our imperfections in the beginning, and more generous and lenient art thou with us than a mother is with her little one.

Now, Lord, we desire, over against thine infinite lenity, thy waiting patience, thy long-suffering and loving kindness, to raise up some sense of obligation in ourselves—some gratitude—some exhibition of love and thankfulness—something that shall show us that the sun has shined, and has brought out some things that grow, and have beauty, and bear fruit. Be pleased to grant that we may be filled with the fruits of the Spirit, and that we may more and more abound in them, and that thine eye may be delighted, and that men around about us may be cheered and comforted by the work which is wrought in us by the Spirit of the living God.

We ask for the forgiveness of our sins, knowing that they are already forgiven. We ask for the continuance of thy gracious presence, knowing assuredly that thou wilt continue to be with us. The sun shall rise and set before thou forgettest those who are under thy care. We pray for thy divine compassion, knowing that as a father pitieth his children, so, already, the Lord pitieth those who fear him. And yet, thou hast made it sweet for us to ask even for invisible things. Thou hast made it a blessed thing to take thy favors, perfumed with thy sense of our need, and with thy forethought in giving that which we desire. We would be receptacles of thine influence. As the sun shines in the dewdrop according to its measure, so shine in us. Fill the whole of our little orbs with thy presence, so that thy life shall augment ours, and sustain it. And day by day may we walk with God, until by and by the welcome and joyful word shall come flying to us, borne by angel messengers, Thy father hath sent for thee. And then may all the love of children be awaked in us, and by faith and confidence may we with cheer exchange things which are seen for things that are unseen, knowing that God, by his angelic messengers will convoy us safely, and bring us home to the land which we have longed for, to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, to the Almighty Father, and to the all-quickening Spirit.

And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, shall be the praise of our salvation forever and ever. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon us, and upon all the truths which we have pondered. May they not fall upon the outward ear alone. May we have some thought of improvement. May we begin, to-day, in some respects, to live better and higher than we have lived before. Fill us with that divine Spirit by which we have been redeemed, and by which we are living from day to day, though with manifest imperfections and sins. We pray that thou wilt bind us to each other by the cords of sympathy and of kindly affection. We pray that pride may be chastened, that obstinacy may be taken away, that every evil and malign passion may be subdued, and that thy grace may reign triumphant in every heart. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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